

**(Washington, DC)** Today, Congressman Alcee L. Hastings (D-Miramar) issued the following statement in response to the release of the Pentagon's study entitled, "Report of the Comprehensive Review of the Issues Associated with a Repeal of 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell.'"

The long-awaited report is the culmination of a near 10-month long study conducted by Army Gen. Carter F. Ham and Defense Department General Counsel Jeh C. Johnson, which included surveys from 115,000 service members and 44,200 military spouses, 72,000 unsolicited opinions made by service members to an online drop box, and comments from open meetings held on military bases.

The study finds that approximately 70 percent of service members, including their families, support open service by gay and lesbian Americans and that 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' repeal would have positive, mixed, or no effects on their units' ability to "work together to get the job done."

"The Pentagon's comprehensive review of the 1993 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' law confirms that it runs counter to the values that our Armed Forces embody and, indeed, our brave men and women in uniform. Furthermore, it dispels the argument that 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' repeal would harm military readiness and unit cohesion. After 17 years of discussion, the only thing left remaining to do is to repeal it.

"Time is of the essence. In May, the House of Representatives passed bipartisan legislation to repeal 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell.' I join President Obama, Defense Secretary Gates, and Adm. Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in calling on the Senate to act as soon as possible in passing the legislation necessary to repeal 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' before the end of the year.

"I look forward to 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' soon being repealed once and for all. Strong leadership has been, and remains, the key to successfully repealing 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' and replacing it with a policy of inclusion and non-discrimination. I am confident that, equipped with this new report, the Pentagon will finally be able to move forward with repeal in a manner that ensures our military's readiness and our national security while meeting the needs of our service members and their families."

Congressman Hastings has been a leader in the fight to repeal 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell,' having introduced an amendment to ban the use of defense appropriations funds to investigate and discharge service members for telling their sexual orientation and legislation that would protect active-duty service members, regardless of their sexual orientation, who openly testify in Congressional hearings by expanding current whistleblower protections between members of the Armed Forces and Members of Congress.

*Congressman Alcee L. Hastings is Vice Chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, a senior member of the House Rules Committee, and Co-Chairman of the U.S. Helsinki Commission.*

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